



**TJC**

and ASSOCIATES, Inc.

Message from  
the President

TJCAA is Green

TJCAA's Business  
Certifications

- Alameda County Small, Local Emerging Business
- Bay Area Green Business Program, Green Business
- City of Oakland Local Business Enterprise
- California DGS Micro Business (SB (micro))
- Port of Long Beach SBE
- San Diego County Water Authority SBE
- SoCal Network SBE
- CA PUC WBE
- Sacramento Municipal Utilities District (SMUD) SEED Vendor

# The TJCAA Quarterly

2015  
[www.tjcaa.com](http://www.tjcaa.com)

## Message from the President, Gianna Zappettini



Despite the shortage of water in California, TJCAA is keeping up with the flow of work coming down the pipe. We are always happy, however, to open the floodgates a little more to tap into new opportunities. So, while we maintain our conservation efforts for

the real H<sub>2</sub>O, we are open to pooling our resources to assist you on your next project. Every drop of work counts!

## TJCAA is Green

We are very pleased to announce that TJCAA has been recertified by the California Green Business Program. This program, which is a partnership of local environmental agencies and utilities, offers certification to companies that can verify their water conservation, pollution prevention, and waste minimization practices. TJCAA's Oakland office has been certified by the Bay Area Green Business Program since 2010.



Achieving our Green Certification required documentation of our green practices through a checklist-style application followed by inspections of our office space, facilities, supplies, systems, and equipment. A recycling specialist from the City of Oakland Environmental Services Division reviewed our solid waste reduction practices. A water conservation specialist from East Bay

Municipal Utility District checked our appliances and fixtures, and a Green Business Consultant from Alameda County inspected our office with an eye toward energy conservation and general pollution prevention.

TJCAA's Bisrat Tekie coordinated the on-site inspections and she found it to be an interesting and enlightening process, saying "Meeting with the inspectors, and walking around the office with them while they checked off their lists, was more than attending a job duty/task for me. It made me think and evaluate and put things in perspective." She added that the detailed inspections were a good reminder to use resources conscientiously.

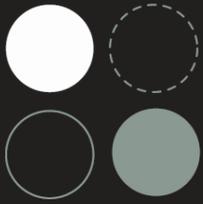
The 11-page checklist submitted by TJCAA covered many of the details that the inspectors confirmed, such as the number and type of light bulbs we have, the products we buy for cleaning, and the amount and type of paper we use. Our recycling practices were reviewed, and we provided info regarding our company policies.

To maintain our small footprint, we usually bike, walk, or ride transit to our uptown office, and we avoid using products that have the potential to cause pollution. Other day-to-day ways we stay green are to minimize paper, energy, and water use. As Bisrat puts it, "When we come through the doors we aim to fulfill, embody, and represent TJCAA, and that includes being green. We recognize the privilege of having access to water and power (resources that we depend on highly) and do not take it for granted."

The program offers several statistics measuring its success. For example, in the power category, the program reports "This year, the California Green Business Program has saved 282,113,714 kilowatt-hours with a total savings of \$28,583,761. That's

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Featured  
Employee -  
Elaine Tee, P.E.



TJCAA's Oakland Office

the equivalent of powering 25,891 houses for an entire year.” (greenbiz.ca.gov)

The success of the California Green Business Program can extend outside the workplace. To help spread the word, the program provided us with information to share with our commercial neighbors, our friends, and families. “We spend a major portion of our lives in our workplaces,” Bisrat concluded, “and applying green as a normal part of our daily work ethic naturally translates to our lives outside of work as well.”

### Featured Employee - Elaine Tee, Senior Electrical Designer

This edition’s featured TJCAA employee is Senior Electrical Engineer Elaine Tee, who has been with us since 2006. With her arrival, our Instrumentation, Controls, and Electrical staff (consisting of ICE lead Paul Giorsetto) became our ICE Group. Elaine and Paul, who had worked together at another firm, pioneered our Oakland presence in a two-desk office near



our current Uptown location. The group and TJCAA have both grown since then; eleven TJCAA staff members are based at TJCAA’s Oakland office in the landmark Cathedral Building.

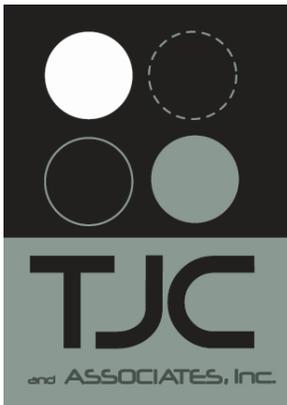
Elaine emigrated from her native country, Myanmar (Burma), when she was 16 years old. At that time, acclimating to school here in the USA was her first priority, and she began at San Francisco’s Newcomer High School, an English-intensive program for newly arrived students. She laughs about landing there, saying “I guess I didn’t break any eggs on my English placement test. I must have got a lot of zeroes.” It is clear, however, that she hit the ground running and has not slowed down since. She earned a degree in Electrical Engineering from UC Davis in 2003 and now performs detailed designs for all aspects of industrial electrical and control systems, including low voltage (480-V) electrical distribution and motor control, lighting and facility electrical systems, motor controls, and automated instrumentation and control systems.

Continuing to increase her professional knowledge is a strong motivator for Elaine, who notes that she is happiest when her projects give her a chance to learn something new. Elaine enjoys working on projects where we touch the entire treatment plant. These projects give her an opportunity to work with all of the processes, systems, and buildings that require electrical distribution, instrumentation, communication, and controls.

At college, she did not start out in electrical engineering. In fact, she began her university studies in chemical engineering, and also tried computer science. Elaine explains that while these subjects were interesting, they required long stints in UC Davis’ underground labs, and she

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## Fun Fact about Our Company

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found that she would rather pursue her studies in a different setting.

Today, we (and our clients) are glad that she changed her major to electrical engineering, a field that got her out of the lab and led her to a design office. As a professional, her projects have also required on-site work. Her field experience includes supervising and performing onsite observations, as well as providing construction/field services for several water and wastewater facilities and expansion projects. As it is with all of our experienced engineers, her work in the field complements and enhances her design skills.

A busy mother, she relaxes with visits to the park and swimming pool with her husband and two children. Her husband, Bo, is a programmer, prompting us to ask whether she predicts a technical career path for the children, as well. "I don't know," Elaine answers cheerfully, "we will try to give them exposure to many things so they can find what interests them most." As we are always on the lookout for good designers-in-the-making, we were pleased to hear that her 4-year-old is showing an aptitude for assembling interchangeable thermoplastic polymer blocks. (After all, we technical folks do love our Legos.)

Her 1-year-old, already a keen observer and assertive communicator, enjoys making situational analyses with her brother, knowing well that he almost always offers an emphatic counterpoint.

She opens the panel discussion with a low and sincere voice, saying "Yes..."

Brother responds: "No!"  
(dramatic pause)  
Sister: "Yes."  
Brother: "No!"  
Sister: "Yes."  
Brother: "No!"

Our recounting cannot do it justice, of course, because the children are trilingual—English, Burmese, and Cantonese—making the disagreement still more fascinating when you hear the original version.

Elaine notes that she has a supportive family; Bo works from home several days a week and the children are fortunate to be cared for by their Grandma during workdays. On our end, we are very glad to have Elaine in our TJCAA family.

## Fun Fact about TJCAA

While many of our TJCAA staff members come from California, we are proud to have a staff hailing from many other interesting places on the globe, as well. Just look at our origins!

Andria – Hayward, CA  
Bee – Sacramento, CA  
Bingwen – Heng Yang, China  
Bisrat – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Daisy – San Francisco, CA  
Eileen – Inglewood, CA  
Elaine – Toungoo, Myanmar  
Gianna – San Francisco, CA  
Jacqui – Nairobi, Kenya  
Jennifer – Mountain Home, ID  
Maria – Palmira, Colombia  
Mike – Concord, CA  
Mitch – Duluth, MN  
Hernando – Cali, Colombia  
Paul – Castro Valley, CA  
Richard – Dundee, Scotland  
Rick – San Bernardino, CA  
Terry – San Bernardino, CA

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Did you know?

Dates to Note

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## Did you know?

Did you know that our sister company, Terrapin Testing ([terrapintesting.com](http://terrapintesting.com)), is accredited with International Accreditation Service, Inc.? According to IAS, "Accreditation is a formal, independent verification that a program or institution meets established quality standards and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. Conformity assessment tasks may include, but are not limited to, testing, inspection, or certification." ([iasonline.org](http://iasonline.org))

Accreditation, IAS explains, shows that an organization operates "at the highest level of ethical, legal and technical standards." The process for accreditation, like the Green Business certification process described above, is informative, and we have enjoyed working for many years with IAS VP, Raj Nathan.

Terrapin Testing's IAS accreditation gives our clients confidence that they will get good value and high quality testing services. Please contact us if you would like to discuss testing services.

## Dates to Note

- |            |                                                       |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| March 20   | The Vernal Equinox                                    |
| March 23   | Big "O" Band at Yoshi's, Oakland                      |
| March 29   | Formula 1 Grand Prix of Malaysia                      |
| March 29   | Kelly Parks Big Band at the Sound Room, Oakland       |
| April 5    | Major League Baseball Opening Day                     |
| April 6    | 109th Anniversary of 1906 Earthquake in San Francisco |
| April 6-12 | Golf – The Masters at Augusta                         |
| April 15   | Taxes Due                                             |
| May 2      | The Kentucky Derby                                    |
| May 10-17  | Amgen Tour of California                              |
| May 16     | The Preakness                                         |
| May 22     | Carburatation Day                                     |
| May 24     | Indianapolis 500                                      |
| June 2     | Junius Courtney Band at Yoshi's, Oakland              |
| June 6     | SOL at Club Fox, Redwood City                         |
| June 6     | The Belmont Stakes                                    |